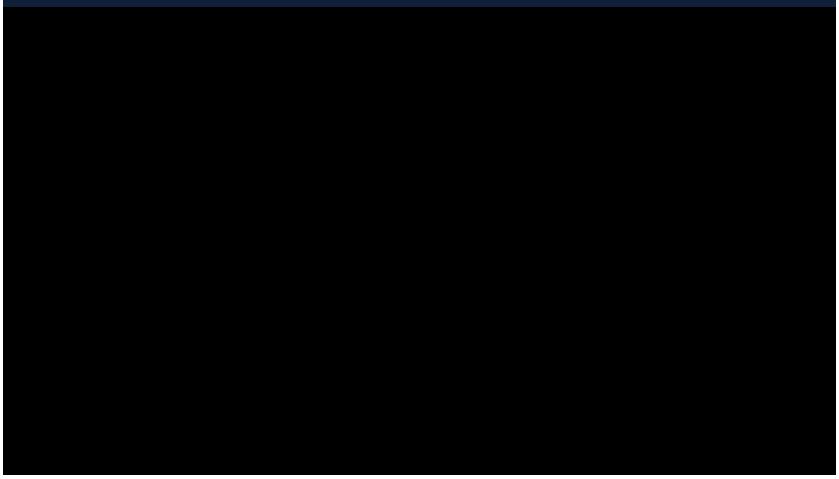
NEWS

Chinese parts, hidden ownership, growing scrutiny: Inside America's biggest maker of voting machines

Scrutiny of the U.S. election system, spurred by Russia's interference in the 2016 election, has put Election Systems & Software in the political spotlight.



Dec. 19, 2019, 6:30 AM EST

By Ben Popken, Cynthia McFadden and Kevin Monahan

OMAHA, Neb. – Just off a bustling interstate near the border between Nebraska and Iowa, a 2,800-square-foot American flag flies over the squat office park that is home to Election Systems & Software LLC.

The nondescript name and building match the relative anonymity of the company, more commonly known as ES&S, which has operated in obscurity for years despite its central role in

U.S. elections. Nearly half of all Americans who vote in the 2020 election will use one of its devices.

That's starting to change. A new level of scrutiny of the election system, spurred by Russia's interference in the 2016 election, has put ES&S in the political spotlight. The source of the nation's voting machines has become an urgent issue because of real fears that hackers, whether foreign or domestic, might tamper with the mechanics of the voting system.

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That has led to calls for ES&
competitors, Denver-based
Systems and Austin, Texas-
to reveal details about their ownership and the
origi m
China

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But ES&S still faces questions about the company's supply chain and the identities of its investors, although it has said it is entirely owned by Americans. And the results of its government penetration tests, in which authorized hackers try to break in so

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